

Arizona Department of Education
Tom Horne,
Superintendent of Public Instruction



Parent's Guide to

Early Intervening and Response to Intervention



Arizona's K-8 Plan
A Primer for Parents

Exceptional Student Services

June 2007

Introduction

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was revised and updated. IDEA is the federal law that defines and explains special education in this country.

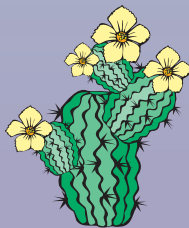
There are two emerging issues in the law that you might hear at IEP meetings and in your conversations with school staff: Early Intervening and Response to Intervention.

The focus for this guide is to explain Response to Intervention (RTI) and Early Intervening Services as they pertain to parents and children who are “at risk” for academic and behavioral problems.

This brochure explains these important changes to special education law and how parents should be involved in each process. Certain aspects of each issue are defined and explained in current law and regulations while other parts are still vague.

What are Early Intervening Services?

One major change in the law is the emphasis on early intervention services for children who are “at risk” for academic and/or behavioral problems. The idea is to intervene early with evidence-based strategies before a child fails and becomes so far behind that they require special education.



How are early intervention and RTI related?

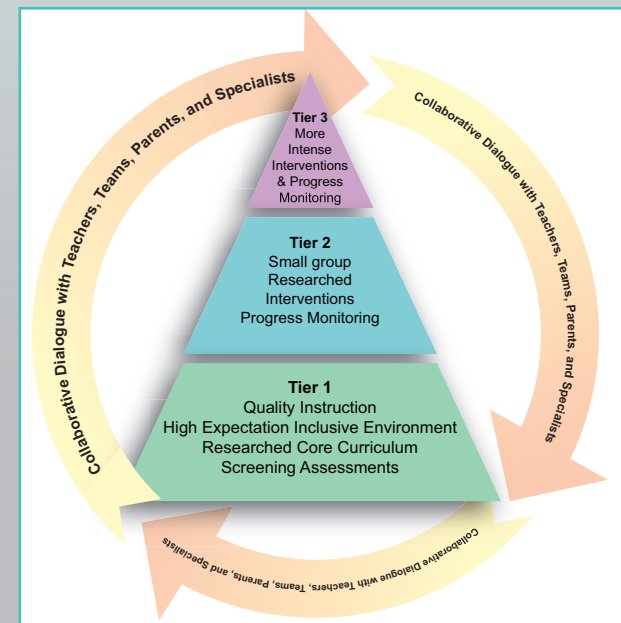
The idea is to intervene early when a student shows signs of academic and/or behavioral problems. RTI is a framework or process schools use to deliver these services.

What is Response to Intervention (RTI)?

Response to Intervention is based on the concept of providing evidence-based instructional and behavioral strategies by highly qualified staff that is matched to student needs and monitored on a frequent basis. The information gathered by this approach is used to make decisions regarding the student's educational program.

What is the RTI process?

Most RTI systems are divided into a three-tier intervention model as illustrated below:



All children are monitored to make sure that they are learning in the instructional environment. If not, they are provided the supports needed to learn. Progress is continued to be monitored. Children flow in and out of support based on their needs.

What components are used in the tiers?

- Screening and benchmarking reading, math, and writing, with curriculum based measures (CBM) three times a year
- Three-tiered model of interventions using progress monitoring to make instructional decisions
- Rescreen with motivators those students falling below expected level to determine whether it is a “skill” problem or a “will” problem
- Scientifically based researched (SBR) interventions/ instruction through all tiers
- A process in place to assess the fidelity of the implementation of instruction and progress monitoring at each tier
- Team problem-solving approach that includes a review of existing data using convergent and divergent data
- Parents involved at every tier

Is RTI the same in all schools?

No; RTI will not be implemented the same way in all schools but the core components listed earlier in this guide should exist in every school using the process. PEAs do not have to choose to use an RTI process and may continue identifying students through a discrepancy model with the use of normed assessments. PEAs must have their RTI plan approved by ADE/ESS prior to identifying students for special education but may use the components for their child find process.

Are districts required to use RTI?

No; they may choose to use it but also may continue to use a discrepancy model here in Arizona.

What are the goals of early intervention and RTI?

- Prevent unnecessary academic failure.
- Implement evidence-based interventions for all students.
- Prevent unnecessary referral to special education.
- Use prevention rather than reaction to student difficulties.
- Increase parent involvement at all three tiers.
- Encourage teachers to use data to make instructional decisions.

What is my involvement in Tier 1?

Remember, Tier 1 is the general education classroom with enriched instruction and qualified staff. Parents are involved in the following ways:

- Frequently communicate with the teacher.
- Ask to see your child's benchmark results.
- Attend school functions, such as back to school night and parent-teacher conferences.
- Ask your child about their school day.
- Monitor and assist with homework assignments.
- Support and reinforce the classroom teacher.
- Meet with the teacher if your child starts to experience difficulties.
- Praise your child for good work and discuss issues that are problems.
- Assist teams with any accommodations needed.

What is my involvement in Tier 2?

If your child is struggling academically or behaviorally, it might be necessary for the school to implement targeted academic and/or behavioral interventions. In many cases, this will be enough to get your child "back on track." Your involvement could include the following:

- Ask the school to notify you of team meetings and progress on the intervention.
- If necessary, attend team meetings.

- Suggest interventions and strategies.
- If necessary, implement and reinforce strategies at home.
- Reinforce your child as he/she improves.
- Maintain records of the interventions tried and their progress to share with a new school if you move.
- Make a referral for your child to the Child Study Team (this process might be called something different in your school). Ask your child's teacher about the referral process.

What is my involvement in Tier 3?

If attempts are unsuccessful in Tiers 1 or 2, it is sometimes necessary for your child to receive even more intense instruction. If no progress is made in Tier 3, a referral for evaluation may be requested. This assessment will determine if your child has a disability and needs special education—specially designed instruction for an eligible student. This is a very formal process, and parent involvement issues have been well defined. Parent involvement includes, but is not limited to, these activities:

- Your consent is required for the school to evaluate or implement special services.
- The school must notify you if they propose to change or not change your child's eligibility, services, or placement.
- Actively paRTIcipate in all Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.
- The special education Parent Rights brochure will explain your involvement and rights in special education.

Conclusion

This primer has been a brief introduction to the new process of early intervention and response to intervention. Don't be overwhelmed; this is new for educators as well. For additional information contact:

Parent Information Network

602-542-3852

1-800-352-4558

or

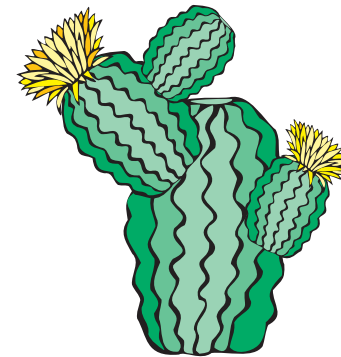
Dolores Ratcliff

602-542-0610

dolores.ratcliff@azed.gov

Remember, early intervention and RTI are good for your child. Every child receives assistance at one or more levels. It encourages a proactive rather than reactive approach to solving academic and behavioral problems.

G:\Library\PRODUCTS\TA Products\Parent Involvement in Early Intervening JC Is 3-06.doc



The contents of this publication were developed with funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Education under Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act Amendments of 2004.

The Arizona Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or in its hiring and employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy, please contact the Administrative Services DAS at (602)542-3186.

Developed by
John Copenhaver, Director
Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center
1780 N. Research Parkway, Suite 112
Logan, UT 84341

Modified by

Dolores Ratcliff
RTI Project Coordinator

Exceptional Student Services
Arizona Department of Education
602-542-0610
Fax: 602-364-1115
Dolores.Ratcliff@azed.gov